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Cette recherche avait pour but d'évaluer les habiletés de communication en français d'élèves qui avaient suivi un programme intensif de français langue seconde en 4e, 5e et 6e années et qui suivaient, au moment de la recherche, un programme spécial d'immersion tardive. Quatre groupes ont participé à cette étude : deux groupes du programme intensif, un groupe du programme d'immersion primaire et un groupe du programme d'immersion tardive. Les résultats inclinent à conclure que le niveau de compétence en français des élèves du programme intensif se rapproche beaucoup plus de celui des élèves du programme d'immersion primaire que le niveau de compétence des élèves du programme d'immersion tardive. Ceci met en évidence l'efficacité du programme intensif de français que les élèves du premier groupe avaient suivi au primaire.

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The Long-Term Effect of the Intensive French Second Language Program: An Assessment of Student Performance in Secondary I

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Résumé

Le but de cette recherche était d'évaluer les habiletés langagières d'élèves qui avaient suivi un programme intensif de français langue seconde en 4^{e}, 5^{e}, et 6^{e} années et qui suivaient, au moment de la recherche, un programme spécial d'immersion tardive.

Quatre groupes d'élèves ont participé à cette étude: deux groupes d'élèves du programme intensif (groupe INT_1 et groupe INT_2), un groupe d'élèves du programme d'immersion primaire (groupe EI) et un groupe du programme régulier d'immersion tardive (groupe LI).

Les habiletés langagières ont été évaluées à l'aide des tests suivants: un test de compréhension auditive, un test de lecture, un test d'expression orale et un test de production écrite. De plus on a administré un test de géographie en français.

Les résultats indiquent que: (1) il n'y a pas de différences significatives entre le groupe INT_1 et le group INT_2 et ces deux groupes sont considérés comme un seul groupe (groupe INT) par la suite; (2) le groupe INT a obtenu des résultats nettement supérieurs à ceux du groupe LI à tous les tests sauf à un sous-test de géographie et à plusieurs mesures d'évaluation de l'expression orale et de la production écrite, à ces mesures-là il n'y a pas de différence significative entre le groupe INT et le groupe LI; (3) le groupe INT a obtenu des résultats nettement inférieurs à ceux du groupe EI

au test de lecture, à toutes les mésures d'évaluation du test d'expression orale et à une des mesures d'évaluation du test de production écrite (grammaire); il n'y a pas d'autres différences significatives entre le groupe INT et le groupe EI; (4) le groupe LI a obtenu des résultats nettement inférieurs à ceux du groupe EI à la plupart des tests.

Les résultats de cette étude nous mènent à conclure que le niveau de compétence en français des élèves du groupe INT se rapproche beaucoup plus de celui du groupe EI que le niveau de compétence du groupe LI. Ceci met en évidence l'efficacité du programme intensif de français que les élèves du groupe INT avaient suivi à l'élémentaire.

The purpose of this study was to assess the French proficiency of students who had attended an intensive French second language program in grades 4, 5 and 6 and who were, at the time of this study, enrolled in a special late immersion program.

Four groups of secondary I students participated in the study: two groups of students from the intensive French program (INT_1 group and INT_2 group), one group of students from an early immersion program (EI group) and one group of students from a regular late immersion program (LI group).

The following French language tests were administered: a listening comprehension test, a reading comprehension test, an oral production test and a written production test. A French geography test was also given.

The results show that: (1) there were no significant differences between the INT_1 and INT_2 groups and these two groups were, therefore, considered as one group; (2) the INT group scored significantly higher than the LI group on all the tests except one geography subtest and several measures of the oral and written production tests; on these measures there were no significant differences between the INT group and the LI group; (3) the INT group scored significantly lower than the EI group on the reading comprehension test, on all the measures of the oral production test and on the grammar component of the written production test; there were no other significant differences

between the INT group and the EI group; (4) the LI group scored significantly lower than the EI group on practically all the tests.

The results lead to the conclusion that the level of French proficiency of the INT group is much closer to that of the EI group than the level of proficiency of the LI group. The findings of the study point to the efficacy of the intensive French program that the INT students had attended in elementary school.

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This report describes a follow-up study undertaken in order to assess the long-term effect of the Intensive French second language program implemented in one of the elementary schools of the English sector of the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal (P.S.B.G.M.)

The program is introduced in grade 4 and, at that level, 90 daily minutes are devoted to French language instruction. In grades 5 and 6, instructional time in French is reduced to 60 daily minutes. The primary objective of the program is the development of communicative skills. To achieve this goal, both a formal second language teaching approach and an informal "immersion" approach are used.

The program has been systematically evaluated (Adiv and Doré 1982, 1983, 1984). The results of these evaluations show that, at all three grade levels, the students participating in the Intensive French program performed significantly better on the French language tests (oral and written comprehension and production) than the control groups which consisted of students taking the regular French second language program (one daily period of French instruction). Moreover, there were practically no significant differences between the students in the Intensive French program and those in the regular program on a battery of standardized English language and mathematics tests (Canadian Tests of Basic Skills).

The French language skills of the students in the Intensive French program have also been compared to those of students in an early immersion

program. The results of this comparison indicate that even by the end of grade 6, the students in the Intensive French program still scored significantly lower than the immersion students on practically all the measures of evaluation.

The Study

Upon completion of the elementary school studies, the pilot group of students from the Intensive French program entered a special late immersion program at the secondary I level. The purpose of the present study was to assess the French language skills of these students at the end of their first year in the immersion program in order to see whether they could be integrated with students from an early immersion program during the following year.

Method

The Sample

Four groups of secondary I students participated in this study: (1) two groups of students who had followed an Intensive French program in the upper elementary grades (hereafter INT_1 and INT_2 groups), (2) a group of students from an early immersion program (hereafter EI group) and (3) a group of students from a regular late immersion program (hereafter LI group).

The INT_1 group contained all the students who had followed the Intensive French program described above. The students in the INT_2

group had also attended an Intensive French second language program in grades 4, 5, and 6. However, in that program, the instructional time in grade 4 was only two thirds of that in the other program, i.e., 60 daily minutes. Together the INT_1 and INT_2 groups comprised two full classes which were not divided according to the type of Intensive program the students had followed in elementary school.

The EI group also consisted of two full classes. Practically all of the students in these classes had followed the usual early immersion program, i.e., all of their instruction had been in French from kindergarten through grade 2. In grade 3, they had received 60% of their instruction in French and 40% in English. In grades 4, 5 and 6 the pattern was reversed, i.e., 60% of the instruction was in English and 40% in French.

The LI group comprised only one full class of students. The students in this group had followed the regular French second language program (one daily period) in elementary school and were now participating for the first time in an intensive French program.

In secondary I, the characteristics of the French program attended by each of these groups were as follows: The EI students received 28% of their total instructional time in French. Three fourth of this time was devoted to French language arts and the remainder was taken up by a geography course. The two INT groups and the LI group received 50% of their instructional time in French. Here two more content courses, mathematics and ecology, were taken in French. Although the amount of instructional time was the same for the INT and LI groups, the programs differed qualificatively because of the more extensive exposure to French

which the INT_1 and the INT_2 students had had in elementary school.

The students in the four groups attended the same school which had a total of three early immersion classes, two special late immersion classes and one regular late immersion class at the secondary I level. Thus, except for one early immersion class, all the secondary I immersion classes of that school were included in this study. It should be noted that the students were always grouped for their various French courses according to the program to which they belonged, except in the case of geography where this division was not maintained.

Most of the students in the four groups came from middle socio-economic class homes and none of them spoke French as their mother tongue. The exact sample sizes of the groups are indicated in Table 1.

The Test Battery

In order to assess the students' French language skills, the following battery of tests was administered: (i) a listening comprehension test, (ii) a reading comprehension test, (iii) an oral production test and (iv) a written production test. Moreover, a geography test was administered to see how well the students could handle a content subject in French. Each test is briefly described below. In addition, all the students were given a non-verbal test (Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices Test) to control for possible differences in mental capacity among the groups.

(i) The Listening Comprehension Test

The listening comprehension test contained nine passages followed by one or several questions with multiple choice answers (22 in all). Three of the passages were taken from a listening comprehension test prepared by the Ministère de l'education for use with grade 6 francophone students. The other passages came from a listening comprehension test developed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (test de comprehension auditive, niveau A, revised edition 1978). The passages in the first part of the test consisted of short stories and those in the second part consisted of radio announcements pertaining to weather, news and sports and one lengthly dialogue. All of the items on the test (passages, questions and answers) were tape recorded. The passages and the questions were presented orally only. The multiple-choice answers were presented orally and in written form.

(ii) The Reading Comprehension Test

The reading comprehension test comprised ten texts consisting of three short newspaper articles, a weather forecast, two advertisements, a recipe, a comic strip, a short story and a poem. Each text was followed by several questions with multiple-choice answers (21 in all). The test items were taken from two reading tests developed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (tests de compréhension de l'écrit, niveaux A et B, 1978). Nine of the texts were taken from niveau A and one was taken from niveau B.

(iii) The Oral Production Test

This test was divided into two parts. Part I was a picture-based test and Part II was an interview. In the first part, the student had to narrate a story based on the pictures he or she was shown. In the second part, the tester engaged the student in a conversation on two different topics: the student's feelings about high school and a discussion about television shows and his or her television viewing habits.

To assess the students' proficiency in oral production, two different measures were used. First, each student's speech sample was evaluated globally by two francophone judges who worked independently. Four different aspects of oral proficiency were assessed: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and communication. Each variable was rated on a five-point scale going from a maximum of 5 (native like proficiency) to a minimum of 1 (very poor). In order to see if the students' oral production skills were influenced by the nature of the task, grammar, vocabulary and communication were evaluated twice, once on the narration task and once on the interview task. The ratings of the two judges were then combined to yield, for each student, a single mean for every variable.

Second, a more objective evaluation of the students' oral production was provided by (a) counting the number of sentences produced by each student on the narration task and (b) calculating the percentage of grammatically and semantically correct sentences.

(iv) The Written Production Test

The students were given a choice of five topics and were asked to write a composition on one of them. The length of the composition was not specified. As in the case of the oral skills, the students' written production skills were assessed globally by two francophone judges working independently. The compositions were rated on each of the following variables: content, grammar, vocabulary and spelling. The ratings ranged from a maximum of 5 to a minimum of 1. The evaluation of both raters were combined to form an average score for each variable.

(v) The Geography Test

The geography test contained three subtests which, from a linguistic perspective, required different kinds of skills. In subtest I, the students had to match a word with its definition (10 items in all). In subtest II, they had to complete two "cloze" passages. The deleted items (fourteen in all) were provided at the end of the texts interspersed among several distractors. In subtest III, the students again had to fill in blanks (11 in all), but this time the deleted items were not provided. The content of the test, as well as the terminology, were covered by the curriculum and the teachers were consulted prior to the construction of the test to ensure that the material had been taught in every class. Moreover, the test was pre-tested with the one early immersion class which did not participate in the full evaluation.

Procedure for Administering the tests

In order to disturb class routines as little as possible, all the tests, except the French oral production test, were group administered to intact classes. The tests of students with French-speaking parents were later excluded from the evaluation. The oral production test was administered individually to a subsample of the total sample. Each individual test lasted appriximately 10 minutes and the entire session was tape-recorded. All the tests were administered by francophone testers during the last week of April 1985.

Results

The results of the INT_1 and INT_2 groups were analyzed first. A one-way analysis of variance procedure revealed no significant differences between these two groups on the scores of the Standard Progressive Matrices Test. Similarly, there were no significant differences between these two groups on any of the French language tests and on the geography test. In consequence, it was decided to collapse the test results of the INT_1 and INT_2 groups in all subsequent analyses and to refer to the entire group as the INT group.

Next, the INT group's scores of the Standard Progressive Matrices Test were compared to those of the EI and LI groups, using again the one-way analysis of variance procedure. Here, too, there were no significant differences among the groups. Thus, mental capacity was not considered an influencing factor on possible between-group differences on the other tests. The latter were, therefore, analyzed with the same

statistical procedure. Separate analyses were carried out for each test and subtest. In addition, wherever significant differences were noted, a Newman-Keuls procedure of multiple comparisons was used to determine which groups differed significantly from one another. The results of all these analyses are described below and are shown in summary form in Table 2.

(i) The Listening Comprehension Test

On this test the LI group ($\bar{X}$ = 9.25) scored significantly lower than both the INT group ($\bar{X}$ = 12.17) and the EI group ($\bar{X}$ = 12.97) and there was no significant difference between the scores of the latter two groups.

(ii) The Reading Comprehension Test

All three groups differed markedly from one another on this test. The EI group ($\bar{X}$ = 15.47) scored significantly higher than the INT group ($\bar{X}$ = 12.33) who, in turn, scored significantly higher than the LI group ($\bar{X}$ = 9.68).

(iii) The Oral Production Test

On Part I of the oral production test (narration), the three groups differed again significantly from one another on pronunciation (EI, $\bar{X}$ = 3.50; INT, $\bar{X}$ = 3.12; LI, $\bar{X}$ = 2.71), grammar (EI, $\bar{X}$ = 3.17; INT, $\bar{X}$ = 2.83; LI, $\bar{X}$ = 2.50) and on vocabulary (EI, $\bar{X}$ = 3.11; INT, $\bar{X}$ = 2.74;

LI, $\bar{X}$ = 2.32). On each of these variables the INT group scored significantly lower than the EI group and significantly higher than the LI group. On the other hand, on the communication measure, the difference between the INT group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.78) and the LI group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.62) was not significant and both groups were rated significantly lower than the EI group ($\bar{X}$ = 3.14). With respect to the number of sentences produced, there was no significant difference among the three groups. However, the proportion of correct sentences produced by the EI group (52%) was significantly higher than that produced by the INT group (35%) and the latter group, in turn, produced a significantly higher proportion of correct sentences than the LI group (25%).

On Part II of the test (interview), the EI group was again rated significantly higher than the two other groups on all the measures of evaluation. In contrast, there were no significant differences between the INT group and the LI group except in pronunciation where the latter group was rated significantly lower than the former (for the numerical values of the ratings, see Table 2).

The comparison between the ratings on the narration and those on the interview shows that there were practically no differences in the students' performance on these two tasks.

(iv) The Written Production Test

The results of this test reveal no significant differences among the three groups with respect to the content ratings. In grammar, the EI group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.84) was rated significantly higher than the INT group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.62) and the LI group ($\bar{X}$ = 2.45) and there was no significant difference between the latter two groups. On the other hand, in vocabulary and spelling the ratings of the INT group (vocabulary, $\bar{X}$ = 2.91; spelling, $\bar{X}$ = 2.86) did not differ significantly from those of the EI group (vocabulary, $\bar{X}$ = 3.04; spelling, $\bar{X}$ = 2.93) and both groups were rated significantly higher than the LI group (vocabulary, $\bar{X}$ = 2.43; spelling, $\bar{X}$ = 2.43).

(v) The Geography Test

On subtest I of the geography test, there were no significant differences among the three groups. However, on subtests II and III as well as on the total score, the LI group scored significantly lower than the EI group and the INT group and there was no significant difference between the latter two groups. In descending order, the scores were as follows: subtest II: EI = 10.50; INT = 9.12, LI = 6.50; subtest III: INT = 7.55, EI = 7.45; LI = 5.61; total score: EI = 25.20, INT = 23.57, LI = 18.00.

Summary and Discussion

The findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

(1) There were no significant differences between the INT_1 and INT_2 groups on any of the tests and these two groups were, therefore,

collapsed into one group (INT group).

(2) The INT group scored significantly higher than the LI group on all the tests except for one geography subtest and several measures of the oral and written production tests; on these measures there were no significant differences between the INT group and the LI group.

(3) The INT group scored significantly lower than the EI group on the reading comprehension test, on all the measures of the oral production test and on the grammar component of the written production test; there were no other significant differences between the INT group and the EI group.

(4) The LI group scored significantly lower than the EI group on practically all the tests.

The first major finding to emerge from this study is that the level of French proficiency of the INT group is much closer to that of the EI group than the level of proficiency of the LI group. Thus, the results of this study acknowledge the efficacy of the Intensive French program that the INT students had followed in elementary school.

The second major finding is that in certain areas of competence, such as listening comprehension, the INT students' skills are as highly developed as those of the EI students. As noted earlier, previous studies have shown that in the elementary grades, the INT students' performance was always significantly lower than that of students in an early immersion program (Adiv and Doré 1983, 1984). Thus, it would seem that the one-year immersion experience has allowed the INT students to " catch up" to the early immersion students in certain areas of language competence.

On the other hand, the INT students' oral production skills are still markedly less developed than those of the EI students. In fact on several of the measures, particularly on the interview task, the performance of the INT students is not significantly different from that of the LI students. This finding is difficult to explain since the Intensive French program in grades 4, 5 and 6 stressed the development of oral communication skills.

Another important area of language proficiency where the skills of the INT students seem to be still lagging is reading comprehension. Yet when these same skills are applied to a specific subject which has been studied such as geography, the INT students seem to be able to handle the material as well as the early immersion students. The reason for this discrepancy may lie in the broad range of vocabulary covered by the various texts included in the reading test. Here the cumulative French experience of the EI students would give the latter

an advantage over the INT students.

It should be noted that all of these conclusions must be accepted cautiously since they are based on the results of a one-time testing situation. Nevertheless, they suggest that, if the INT students are to be integrated with the EI students in secondary II, special attention should be paid to the development of those French language skills in which the INT students seem to be considerably weaker than their peers from the early immersion program.

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Table I

Sample Sizes

Intensive French Program	
INT_1	22
INT_2	24
Early Immersion Program	
EI	43
Late Immersion Program	
LI	23

Table 2

Summary of Test Results[a]

	EI	INT	LI	F. ratio	df
Listening Comp. (22)[b]	12.97	12.17	9.25	8.21***	2,94
Reading Comp. (21)	15.47	12.33	9.68	20.19***	2,98
Oral Production					
(i) Narration					
-pronunciation (5)	3.50	3.12	2.71	15.56***	2,55
-grammar (5)	3.17	2.83	2.50	14.64***	2,55
-vocabulary (5)	3.11	2.74	2.32	10.90***	2,55
-communication (5)	3.14	2.78	2.62	4.18*	2,55
- # of sentences	19.78	20.65	18.53	1.29	2,55
- % correct	52	35	25	13.41***	2,55
(ii) Interview					
-pronunciation (5)	3.50	3.12	2.71	15.56***	2,55
-grammar (5)	3.28	2.87	2.71	11.52***	2,55
-vocabulary (5)	3.22	2.70	2.53	11.58***	2,55
-communication (5)	3.22	2.65	2.59	8.22***	2,55

Table 2 (cont'd)

Summary of Test Results

		EI	INT	LI	F. ratio	df
Composition						
- content	(5)	3.13	2.88	2.83	2.68	2,97
-grammar	(5)	2.84	2.62	2.45	4.98**	2,97
-vocabulary	(5)	3.04	2.91	2.43	11.00***	2,97
-spelling	(5)	2.93	2.86	2.43	9.96***	2,97
Geography						
-subtest I	(10)	7.25	6.91	5.89	2.63	
-subtest II	(14)	10.50	9.12	6.50	12.96***	2,97
-subtest III	(11)	7.45	7.55	5.61	6.77**	2,97
-total	(35)	25.20	23.57	18.00	10.42***	2,97

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

[a] Mean scores joined by a solid line differ significantly from one another according to the Newman-Keuls Multiple Comparison Test.

[b] Maximum scores in parentheses.